

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 were pending at the time the Office Action was issued.

Claims 12-18 were objected to because of informalities.

Claims 1-2, 4-8, 19, 21, and 22 were rejected.

Claims 3, 9-11, 20, and 23-25 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 12, and 19 are currently amended.

Claims 8, 9, and 25 are presently canceled.

Thus, claims 1-7 and 10-24 are currently pending.

Objections to Informalities

Claims 12-18 were rejected because claim 12 incorrectly included two periods. Claim 12 has been amended to replace the first period with a semi-colon. Applicants submit that this amendment resolves the objection as to claim 12 and to claims 13-18 that depend from claim 12. Thus, applicants respectfully request the objection be withdrawn against claims 12-18.

Because the Office Action asserts no other objections or rejections to claims 12-18, applicants submit that claims 12-18 are in condition for allowance.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 3, 9-11, 20, and 23-25. To put the claims in condition for allowance, applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 19

to include limitations recited in allowable claims. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 9 and claim 8 from which claim 9 depends. Claims 8 and 9 are presently canceled. Claim 19 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 25. Claim 25 also is presently canceled.

Applicants submit that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, because claims 2-7, 10, and 11 depend from and apply additional limitations to claim 1, claims 2-7, 10, and 11 are allowable for at least the same reasons for which claim 1 is allowable, as well as for the patentability of the limitations each applies to claim 1. For example, because claims 3, 10, and 11 also are indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form, applicants submit that claims 3, 10, and 11 also are allowable for independent reasons beyond the reasons for which claim 1 is allowable. Claims 1-7, 10, and 11, are thus in condition for allowance.

Applicants also submit that claim 19 is in condition for allowance. Moreover, because claims 20-24 depend from and apply additional limitations to claim 19, claims 20-24 are allowable for at least the same reasons for which claim 19 is allowable, as well as for the patentability of the limitations each applies to claim 19. For example, because claims 20, 23, and 24 are indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form, applicants submit that claims 20, 23, and 24 are allowable for independent reasons beyond the reasons for which claim 19 is allowable. Claims 19-24 are thus in condition for allowance.

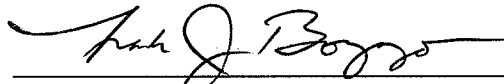
In sum, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-7 and 10-24 all are now in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all pending claims are believed to be allowable and the application is in condition for allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any further issues regarding this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney for the applicants at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.



Frank J. Bozzo

Registration No. 36,756

Direct Dial: 206.342.6294

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P. O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
206.342.6200

